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## COLLEGE-COMMUNITY DRAMATICS AND THE G. I. STUDENT

GARRETT L. STARMER  
*Hendrix College*

An increasing interest has been shown recently in a form of college theatricals known as "College-Community" or "Town and Gown" productions, in which the student casts and crews are supplemented by adults—residents of the community and, in some instances, members of the professional theater.

To mention but a few such College-Community dramatic activities, attention is called to the last Tributary Theater edition of *Theater Arts* in which is described the Stanford University plan.<sup>1</sup> In the same issue, briefly mentioned under "War Service; New Phase", is described the Montana State College experiment with townspeople, veterans, and students in the college dramatic program.<sup>2</sup> For a number of years the University of Louisville has been carrying on a most active program of "Town and Gown" dramatics. Many other groups in increasing numbers are successfully using, in whole or part, this form of cooperative dramatic activity.

Especially during the recent wartime manpower shortage on our campuses, additional schools turned to the town group for emergency help and are now planning to adopt the cooperative casting as a part of their regular peacetime program planning. The increasing number of dramatic groups turning to the cooperative casting plan is indicative of the success and advantages to be gained from it.

Of most timely concern to us during this post-war readjustment period is the fact that this cooperative program is of the greatest benefit and value to the veteran on our campus in his social readjustment to college life. To better understand the value of such participation for the G. I. student, an understanding of the cooperative activity is necessary. Let us first survey some of the more general, long-time advantages of the College-Community program—the values to the regular college student, to the institution, and to the community.

Perhaps the most obvious advantage is the cooperation and friendly spirit of appreciation it fosters for the institution among the townspeople. From this writer's experiences with four such College-Community productions, he has discovered that townspeople who were in

1. "Artists in Residence", *Theater Arts*, July, 1945, p. 408.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 435.

any way concerned with the productions have become most enthusiastic boosters for the institution because of its alertness to new ideas and teaching devices. This interest in the institution has carried over into an awareness of and interest in general educational programs and in the problems of the educators.

One of the most amusing and pleasing reactions from town-folks after participating in a College-Community production is the almost invariable statement of surprise to find that the college curriculum is, after all, practical, and that the professors are actually human and understanding. Stereotyped reactions to college life and instruction are lost with the newly acquired sense of association resulting from participation in an activity of the school.

Another advantage of this cooperative program is the real-life experiences it offers to the students. It is a little startling to realize that the average college student is singularly unprepared to understand the thoughts, problems, and reactions of the average man who works for a living and supports a wife and family, or of the average housewife who raises that family and keeps that home. Our average college student tastes but briefly of life outside of his school "world" until he graduates at the age of 20 or 21. Certainly it is no small adjustment for the graduating student to leave the typical school situation with its all-enveloping student interests and face the psychologies and realities of the work-a-day world into which he must all at once be plunged.

Helping to minimize this sudden adjustment, participation in College-Community productions gives the student an opportunity to be at least "exposed to" the philosophies and psychologies, reactions and outlooks typical of the average man in the world at large. This close working association and friendly common interest with the adult members of the cast tend to stimulate in the student an interest in the more mature and practical reactions of the adult members. The close work and play association allows the student to acquire these more mature outlooks and psychologies before being thrust among them—he is given an opportunity to become oriented, in a small way, to this way of life as it is contrasted with the uniquely narrow and characteristic "world" of typical school life.

As an illustration, visualize the maturing effect that the following four townspeople had upon the ten student members (four veterans) of one of the recent College-Community productions directed by this writer: (1) a married man, father of two young children, manager of a local production credit association, and president of the Junior Chamber of Commerce—by consensus of opinion, a successful businessman with a fine personality; (2) a six year old boy, the son of a widowed college home economics instructor who attended most of the rehearsals; (3) a 26 year old high school teacher, recently married, expecting her first child "in about six or seven months"; and (4) a middle-aged, none too successful insurance agent, the father of eight children.

The various reactions to the common problems of the dramatic production experienced and expressed by these people were, obviously,

enlightening to the immature students. Through the friendly conversations resulting from the common problems and objectives, the students gained from the adults an insight into the mature and settled reactions of the adult members, into their thought processes, and into their objectives in life.

Perhaps one of the greatest lessons that the townsperson can impart to the student is the fact that knowledge is for the use of the individual—and not for that test, the information to be learned and then forgotten!

Adult education is another decided advantage to be found in the College-Community dramatic program. The stimulating experience of working with youth, the outlet for pent-up emotions, and the opportunity for creative expression—all these make the cooperative activity a beneficial and enjoyable one for the townsperson.

But, as previously mentioned, the program fills a timely and urgent need on our campuses today. It is of the greatest immediate benefit to the G. I. student in his social readjustment to school life.

The average veteran on the campus today, although being but a year or two older than the regular student in chronological age, is often many years older in emotional age. In many cases, our young G. I. students, in the course of their service careers, have packed into their young lives a normal life-time of maturing experiences. It is little wonder then that the returning veteran to the campus complains of the immaturity of the regular students; nor is it any wonder that he seems to feel more at home, more comfortable, with the mature townsperson.

Participation in an activity which offers simultaneous association with both his new daily associates (the students) and his friends by virtue of a more similar maturity (the townspersons) offers proven advantages to the veteran in his readjustment to school life. Such an experience helps him to "bridge the gap" from service to school life, fostering a successful, equitable social adjustment.

The plan employs psychologically sound principles, increasing the evidence for its validity and workability. Psychology tells us that one of the greatest necessities for happiness is that status known as "belonging." "Belonging" includes "Social Acceptance" and "Recognition." The veteran, faced with the fact that he is older than the regular student and a newcomer in an established situation feels as an "intruder." He may quickly find his needed status of "Belonging," however, with its "Social Acceptance" and "Recognition," in a well organized program of student-adult activity.

Participation in such a College-Community program offers the veteran a most adequate and excellent opportunity to find his demands for happiness in a beneficial, pleasant and accepted activity. Greater unity (that feeling of "belonging") than that of a play cast or crew is hard to find.

Here, then, specifically, is one way that we in the field of Speech and Drama can materially help the veteran with his social readjustment. We sponsor a pleasant and educational activity which offers both

"Social Acceptance" and "Recognition," the two necessities for happiness, perhaps more strongly and expediently than any other single college activity. Participation in College-Community dramatic productions offers a working experience for the veteran with both persons of his physical age and with persons of his emotional age in a situation of unity, cooperation and understanding.

Such a situation in which the veteran may work both with the adult and with the student is certainly ideal, since it is, so to speak, readjustment in easy stages. It is the easy springboard to social readjustment, justifying the statement that participation in College-Community dramatics is the veteran's "liberty pass" to successful and speedy social readjustment.

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# ENRICHING ORAL READING THROUGH BETTER SPEECH\*

K. ELOISE LANDRY

*Highland Elementary School, Baton Rouge, Louisiana*

Clifton Fadiman has said that reading aloud is to ordinary reading what walking is to traveling by car. You don't get there so fast, but you see things you never noticed before, and yet get a healthy sense—a novel, fresh, healthy sense—of personal achievement. We might try walking through books for a change, instead of rushing through them in high.

Our curriculum in this period of broadened objectives offers many opportunities for a wide and diverse use of oral reading to the school child. Dramatizations, puppet shows, language activities, assembly programs, the pooling of many vicarious experiences at opportune times are all too evident of the social needs in the school.

The busy adult world likewise has many new uses for good readers. The radio, the talkies, the development of reading clubs, and other social activities, in addition to the crying demand of the business man, are all needs which our schools must take care of.

For so many years we lost sight of the true value of oral reading. Now the pendulum swings back, and, as I have already mentioned, our day's curriculum offers many opportunities for a wide and diverse use of oral reading. It has been found that children in high school who have missed the enriching value of this lost art, have not only been deprived of the pleasure and satisfaction it could bring, but have missed so much thought-getting, appreciation, and experience.

As teachers of younger children, it becomes our privilege to plan a well-rounded and pleasant speech program to utilize better the art of oral reading. As teachers of younger children we are ever conscious of the fact that imitation is one of the oldest methods of teaching correct habits. Therefore, of basic importance in this connection, is the guiding influence of a teacher who has a cultured manner and a pleasant voice; who knows and practices some well-planned standards of oral reading. Such a program, built on the teacher-pupil combination, will enable us to stimulate better oral reading, better appreciation of literature, and better listening habits. Since the child's world of interpretation includes reading aloud (both poetry and prose), story telling, and dramatization, listening becomes the key to a magic door to be opened in the child's early life, through fairy stories, stories of adventure, myths, fables, and children's fine poetry.

Lovers of literature tell us that the printed page is dead and does not come alive until it is read aloud. So true is this of material offered in the lower grades.

\* Paper presented at the convention of the Southern Speech Association at Atlanta, Georgia, March 1946.

The idea that I should like to convey is that reading and listening to good material are highly important and are a part of education that should not be omitted. And I don't think they are something that can be postponed until a later grade. The two should be a part of each year's work. Their values are unlimited:

1. Characters come alive

Is it the simple plot of Anderson's *Ugly Duckling* that makes it a favorite of all children? Is it the simple plot that causes adults to recognize it as one of the finest of children's stories? Partly, but not wholly. The author's delightful expressions and his exquisite descriptions make his story irresistible to young and old alike, and they become aglow and enriched by the voice as they are read aloud. The animals in the story become friend and foe to children as the story unfolds. Older people recognize the standards of judgment used by the ducks, the turkey, and the hen and the cat as being humorously satirical of human stupidity and short sightedness.

2. One experiences pleasure that cannot be measured.

3. Imagination is stimulated by such thoughts as:

"Somebody left a mirror out on the lawn last night  
And twenty foolish fairies in the pale moonlight  
Mistook it for an icepond,  
And when the morning broke  
Twenty early robins  
Chuckled at the joke."

Through such gems we keep alive the inherent imagination of children so that in later years they can read with appreciation and enjoyment the whimsical fantasies of Barrie and the idealistic writings of Wilder and Saroyan.

4. Thinking habits are developed.

5. One meets an ever increasing vocabulary.

Oral reading and listening, because the two go hand in hand, build a background of experiences that enable pupils to meet new experiences with a richer understanding and appreciation. Let me draw an illustration of this from my own classroom. A little eight year old girl received a letter from an uncle in London. She thrilled to his descriptive account of the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace. She actually lived the experience because of her previous meeting with A. A. Milne's poem, *They're Changing the Guard at Buckingham Palace*.

Thus oral interpretation in the Elementary Grades becomes a detailed analysis of the finer shades of meaning, and the ability of the reader to put them across comes only after he has comprehended fully the meaning and desires to reveal them to some other person. Oral reading has its own techniques, and it is through proper speech training that its values are realized.

Attention needs be given to:

1. voice training
2. enunciation, pronunciation, and articulation
3. capturing and giving meaning
4. bodily activity
5. choice of material.

The human voice is the most effective instrument in life. Children are apt to pitch their voices too high. Then it is difficult for them to interpret the thought of the author for the audience, and it is not pleasant to listen to them. Giving attention to pitch is of the utmost importance. Other defects, such as nasality, may be remedied by using simple drill exercises. I suggest choral reading as one method for voice training.

We have made a beginning in our district toward an elementary speech program by preparing a handbook for teachers. This bulletin contains, among other things, simple articulation, enunciation, and pronunciation drill material.

Teachers of speech generally outline the following steps as aids for getting meaning:

1. Getting the central idea
2. Getting the successive ideas
3. Discovering the key words and
4. Getting the author's meaning through word pictures.

Therefore, early emphasis should be placed on thought getting. Better bodily control can be encouraged through dramatization, pantomime, puppet shows, and language activities.

One's whole reading life can depend on the guiding hand of the elementary teacher. Thus we see that careful attention to choice of material should be given even before the child begins school.

It is inconceivable to think of effective oral reading without the development of good speech habits. It is inconceivable to think of either of these without an alert teacher who realizes the values of both.

Letitia Raubicheck says, "Unless teachers of inspiration and power, equipped with training and experience, are ready to initiate the child into the magical world of the poets and story-tellers, he may never do more than gaze longingly through the bars of a gate which remains closed to him. Perhaps the greatest privilege which a teacher can have is that of showing young hearts and imaginations the beauties which lie in recreating with their voices the inspired thoughts of the dream makers."

Thus with the wealth of oral reading material at hand, and the consciousness on the part of the teacher that she is ever the model for her children, these thoughts as expressed by Miss Raubicheck can become a reality.

## HINTS FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL DIRECTOR

WILHELMINA P. BROWN  
*Wyoming, Delaware*

Elliot Nugent had a line in the current success, *The Voice of the Turtle*, that reveals the plight of high school directors. He said that if there were any plays that he hated they were plays about men paralyzed from the waist down, and plays about heterogeneous groups of persons trapped in an elevator, or a wrecked bus, or a railroad coach. And that is the choice of the high school director: heavy drama, or three acts so full of character parts and bits and walk-ons and exits and entrances that the audience feels that it has spent the evening in a revolving door.

Play selection is the first hurdle in the race for a reasonably successful production in the rural community. When I was in the callow months of my first teaching "job," I had a superintendent who wanted plays chosen from the school of writers known to me as those of the sweetness and light club. I leaned toward the other side of the thing: that is, I was for inflicting Eugene O'Neill and (I blush to admit this) Shakespeare on the citizens hereabout who wrestled daily with the soil and in the evening became our audience. These tanned farmers and their wives came to see Junior and to laugh. They did not come to be uplifted, nor to be taught about the cosmic significance of the atomic bomb. All those things have their place, but the high school theater is not it.

I was fresh from an enterprising and sincere college theater where I had worked as part of a group whose major premise is that the college stage is the experimental legitimate theater of the nation, and I confused that idea with the purpose of the high school theater. I did not know the two groups of players and audiences, nor did I understand their expectations, their backgrounds. In this particular community we are associated with persons whose tolerance and sophistication (in the true sense of the word) is so limited that an urban mind would judge them limited, narrow, prejudiced. Perhaps so. The fact remains that in a public school we of the teaching staff must cater, or at least, defer, to the religious and moral sense of our parents and patrons. We must not permit any of the student actors to smoke on the school stage. We must not show the effects of, or indicate the drinking of alcohol. We must not use profanity. These are the unwritten requirements that a high school production must abide by. There are some compensations for these seeming restrictions, however. In times of dramatic stress our leading motion picture and legitimate theater stars seize a cigarette and by their manner of lighting it, inhaling it, and discarding it, show us that they are awfully upset, or about to commit murder, or coldly and desperately planning a visit to the physician's office to learn the worst. Our high school

group must interpret these emotions without the aid of nicotine. As for the liquor-is-quicker scene of debauchery, that is gone without sacrifice. Rarely will you find a parent who is proud to see his offspring caricature a drunk . . .

My criteria in choosing a play at the present time in my career is the material I have to work with, and the amount of the royalty. If I have a girl in the group who is especially capable, I choose my play with her in mind and I confess, most unashamedly and undemocratically, that I have the play mentally cast when I buy it. A play try-out is held, and the supporting cast is chosen in this way, but I try the leads merely for assurance and theater poise. We have with success given types of plays that were very different simply because the abilities and scope of the group varied. We have, because of this reason given "Wuthering Heights," "Claudia," "What A Life," "Seventeen," and "Seven Sisters." All were chosen with an eye to business. The house was each time able to display the S.R.O. sign, and by deletions and substitutions in the script everyone was happy. As for the royalty, I keep in mind that you get what you pay for, and I would not waste my time nor that of the students on a three act play that is royalty free.

I also suggest that the play be studied carefully from the point of view of stagecraft. I attempt to use simple sets and effective lighting, and I know almost exactly just what our capabilities are in attempting to create too many exterior sets and "moon magic" effects for the same evening. I remember vividly one year preparing to stage a Christmas play. I dreamed up the idea of having a snowstorm on the set, and I spent hours with the children sewing boxes of ten-cent store snow into a curtain. We fastened the curtain to the gridiron, and on signal, two boys in the wings were to pull strings to release this in a shower over our tableau. What a scene, we thought! How impressive in the blue light of our balcony spot! But on signal our two boys, in their enthusiasm and adolescent energy, pulled so hard on the strings that they broke. No snow over the place where the Child lay, merely two string ends that wiggled in mid-air and bewitched those of us backstage.

Sometimes it is possible to select a play which was the background for a current motion picture. This is helpful to the cast because they can compare their own reading of their parts with the interpretations of a professional. But I never tell a child "how" to say a line. I encourage their thinking through their characterization and I find that their suggestions are usually sound and workable.

When the scripts are in hand, I have an initial meeting of the group. I distribute to them some literature that I have had mimeographed for them, and we discuss it thoroughly. First off, I give each student a rehearsal schedule that reads as follows:

#### REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

DAY	TIME	DATE	WORK
Weds	after school	Dec. 1	Act. 1
Thurs.	7:30	Dec 2	Act. 1

This schedule shows when the student is expected to have all of his lines, and gives the date each act is started. I usually work on an act a week, putting the whole together in the fourth week of rehearsal. Also indicated on this schedule are dress rehearsals, make-up rehearsals, etc. At the conclusion of the schedule the following notes are placed:

1. Actors may be called at various times other than those indicated to rehearse short scenes that are rough.
2. It is absolutely necessary that lines be memorized on time.
3. There will be no excuses from this schedule, unless the director is notified ahead of time.
4. It may be necessary to change the work of a rehearsal, but the dates and times will remain as stated above.
5. Characters not appearing in the scheduled act need not report.

I might add that it is important for the director to respect the schedule and not make sudden changes in it if he expects the children to respect it.

The next sheet I give to the cast is one entitled "Acting Notes." It generally reads as follows:

#### ACTING NOTES

1. Start now to use your stage voice; you must enunciate clearly.
2. Pick up your cues immediately. It does not matter how long you take to give a speech *so long as you begin on time*.
3. Move very quickly on the stage when you walk and take short steps. Do not develop a "Macbeth stride." Do not shift about on your feet when you speak. This ruins the force of what you are saying.
4. Remember that on the stage you are the character you are building and not yourself. Leave the kid stuff for outside.
5. Do not lose your script.
6. Be on time for rehearsals.
7. This is really a hard job; but we can have a lot of fun together if you will work. Remember that the director knows a little bit more than you about production, but do not hesitate to make any suggestions that you have.
8. Do not think that because you are being constantly coached and directed that you are being "picked on."
9. This is a delightful play and it can be *good*. But you must be adult and intelligent about its presentation.
10. Try to forget your own troubles on the stage and actually live your character.

These things are really to set the morale for the weeks of rehearsal, and after we have discussed them together, we have a reading rehearsal of the script. The first evening may break up on a solemn, even bleak note, when the students realize that having a "part in the play" is a real responsibility. But this gives way to cooperation and sincere effort very shortly.

I also send a letter to the parents of the cast. In this day of automobiles and helicopters I want someone to share my responsibility in the month or so of rehearsal. And the letter "home" reads:

Dear Parent,

Enclosed you will find a copy of the rehearsal schedule for the class play to be given on January third, 1947. Since your daughter/son has been selected for a part in the play I thought perhaps you would like to see a list of scheduled rehearsals. Evening rehearsals will not last later than ten o'clock with the exception of those during the last week of rehearsal.

Thank you for your interest and cooperation.

Yours very sincerely,

And for myself I make two lists of things to be done and I check them as time goes by. One is a check list for publicity releases to local papers and it contains the deadline dates of the papers and the slant on the story I will use each week. In the past I have used such items as selection of the cast, story on costumes, story on special music with the production, a story on the set, one on the author of the play, and perhaps one on the past successes presented by the school group. In this way, the publicity is varied and interesting.

The other schedule for myself is a check list of all the many little things that should be done before the date of production. Many of these I have faculty help on, but it is well to check them. And those points are: printed programs, tickets, posters, committees from the students, publicity, music, costumes, scenery, ushers, and complimentary tickets.

In spite of all this preparation, I always remain in the wings and prompt on the nights of production. I haven't steeled myself to watch from out front yet!

## AS WE LIKE IT

SARA LOWREY  
*Baylor University*

The fundamentals of speech are as old as language, perhaps older, since pantomime is one of the most effective means of communication. I like to find old truths restated in new ways.

A few years ago I heard the scintillating speaker John Mason Brown suggest a charming technique of posture. He said: "The talent of an actress may be measured by the distance between her hip bone and first rib." Now there is a new slant on the old subject of posture. It suggests the essence of good posture for the actor or actress, man or woman, boy or girl. The glamourous actress has a long distance between her hip bones and her first ribs. In achieving that distance she gains uplift in her bearing and can have a strong center (support) and free movement of arms and legs. When students center their thinking on that distance they are likely to be relieved of the tensions in the back or shoulders which so often accompany an effort to stand erect.

This suggestion seems to me to strike at the very center of bad posture and the resulting strain on the voice. Students who are collapsed at the center (who have a short distance between the hip bones and first ribs) not only give a bad appearance but are likely to have weak strained voices due to the lack of strength and control at the diaphragm.

The Reverend Mr. Ralph M. Harper has published a method of voice training which he states is based upon an unpublished study by Sarah H. Hooker, voice teacher of Phillips Brooks. The Reverend Mr. Harper gives a modern touch to this method by calling it "G-Suiting the Body." No doubt most of us have heard of the G-Suit worn by air pilots to lessen the tendency to blackout. The Reverend Mr. Harper states:

"The experience of an American pilot with an almost perfect posture, who flew two years in the Pacific area without a G-Suit and yet laughed at the blackout, leads me to wonder whether all fliers in the future will not be more concerned over correct body mechanics."<sup>1</sup>

A student brought me, recently, a news clipping titled, "Photos of a Yell Show It's Dangerous to Do Too Much." Yelling is a timely subject which most speech teachers are now treating with various degrees of success. I like to lead a few yells in the class room. They make very satisfactory voice exercises and sometimes go far in preventing laryngitis as an aftermath of football games.

1. *G-Suiting the Body*, by Ralph M. Harper; E. C. Schirmer Music Company, 221 Columbus Avenue, Boston, Mass.

The news article mentioned above was from Evanston, Illinois, and stated:

Scientists, who made high speed color movies of a yell taking off, Saturday advised football rooters, political spell-binders and sopranos shooting for high C: 'Don't overdo it.'

The vocal cords, the movies showed, can withstand moderate abuse with no more ill effects than a case of temporary hoarseness. Try to push your voice box around too long, however, and you may get a grade A case of persistent inflammation.

Dr. Paul Moore and his research staff in the school of speech at Northwestern University photographed the busy vocal cords of gridiron fans, public speakers, and voice students.

A mirror, with its own lighting effects, is lowered by a long rod to the subject's larynx. As the subject makes soft and loud noises, the larynx's convulsions are reflected back to a high speed camera.

The films indicated that misuse of the larynx results in "serious spread" of inflammation along the vocal cords.

Dr. Moore said the studies are expected to aid in developing new voice training techniques, throw new light on correction of speech defects caused by abnormal larynxes and aid in the study of paralysis of the vocal cords resulting from illness or war injury.

I shall be interested in further information concerning the results of these studies. Dr. Moore was stationed in Waco for awhile developing methods of voice communication for the army air corps. Our colleague Glenn Capp was chosen to supervise this training in the southern area. He could no doubt give us helpful tips on methods of voice training as *he* likes it.

## BOOK REVIEWS

EDNA WEST

SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORY PLAYS, by E. M. W. Tillyard, New York: The Macmillan Co. 1946. viii + 336 pp. \$3.00.

In *Shakespeare's History Plays*, Mr. Tillyard has given the serious student of Shakespeare an informative and stimulating book. Part I is concerned with the background of the history plays. That Shakespeare was thoroughly conversant with the Elizabethan conception of history and used it in the historical plays to set forth a political philosophy is the chief point of Part I.

In taking this view the author throws the weight of his opinion toward a Shakespeare of greater education, owing less to nebulous inspiration than has frequently been assumed. Mr. Tillyard holds that a correct social order established by nature was so unquestioned among his contemporaries that the dramatist must necessarily have absorbed it. In the thought-idiom of his day, he set forth the order back of the disorders with which his plays deal.

Mr. Tillyard discounts the idea that the historical plays were in part opportunistic capitalization upon the surge of patriotism following the defeat of the Spanish Armada. He finds the Chronical Play less important in relation to Shakespeare than is usually supposed, but the Morality becomes more significant if the plays are thought of as illustrating an accepted pattern. As ideas were more important than facts to this interpretation, it is natural that Hall should supersede Holinshed in importance as a source.

Part II is devoted chiefly to the plays which comprise the two tetralogies from *Richard II* through *Richard III*. There are also chapters on *King John* and *Macbeth* but none on *Henry VIII*, which Mr. Tillyard would exclude from the Shakespearean canon.

Especially thought-provoking are the sections on *Henry IV*. The author goes beyond the scope of his thesis to discuss the great variety of the two *Henry IV*'s and show how this variety is "given a coherence very different indeed from the coherence of Shakespearean tragedy but in its own way not inferior."

The case for the acceptance of all three plays of *Henry VI* as the work of Shakespeare is plausibly argued. Certainly they are cases in point for the theory underlying the book.

The volume is an admirable combination of scholarship and the insight that must interpret the scholar's findings. Some readers may become a trifle restive at the thought of a Shakespeare grown so self-conscious in the service of an established interpretation of history, but it is, of course, not necessary to accept the author's theories *in toto* to derive profit and pleasure from the reading.

ROSA LEE WALSTON  
Chairman, Division of Languages  
and Literature,  
Georgia State College for Women

STAGE CRAFT FOR NON-PROFESSIONALS, by F. A. Buerki. Madison, Wisconsin, 1945. 66 pp.

Simple, practical, and conveniently arranged is the *Stage Craft for Non-Professionals* by Fred Buerki of the University of Wisconsin. With 68 drawings in its 66 pages the book should attract the attention of high schools, colleges, and little theatres whose students and directors are seeking help in the building, painting and lighting of scenery. As Mr. Buerki states in his introduction, there are many books dealing with the scenic arts; but they are often too involved for the non-professional's use. Consequently with these facts in mind, the author has presented "a simple, concise, yet technical discussion of stage-crafts."

The first chapter of the book could be called "Introducing the Stage," for the parts of the physical stage are identified and the common stage terms and directions are explained. For the experienced director and student-crew member this "introduction" may seem superfluous. Yet the presentation is made in such a clear-cut manner, with drawings approaching x-ray value, that it is stimulating and gives assurance of the easy-to-follow style in which the discussion is developed. For the stage craft student and director of less experience, the information serves as a glorified glossary, familiarizing the student with the language as well as the areas of the realm called "Backstage."

Classification and significance of sets are explained briefly as the discussion works up to the planning of the set. The steps in the planning are both described and illustrated with such clarity that one could scarcely fail to comprehend. The use of cycs, the making of box sets and set pieces, the building of platforms and stairs and of doors and windows are phases handled with equal clarity and simplicity.

The suggestion of the author in regard to properties and sound effects common to plays in general should prove a valuable time-saver for beginning directors, and his presentation of the fundamentals of lighting should be comparatively easy to follow.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the book is the chapter on painting. This portion by its very nature permits more challenge to the creative instinct and offers help probably on more different productions than most of the other sections.

Mr. Buerki is well qualified to offer help to stage craft enthusiasts, for his architectural designs, color schemes, and styles of painting add much to the effectiveness of the productions at the University of Wisconsin where he is teaching. His book shows that he is not interested in giving a complicated treatise on the technical part of a production. His is a working and workable approach which has evolved from experience in the scene shop itself—not from inherited theories on "how it might be done."

An objection which someone might raise to the book is its brevity which results from the use of definitions rather than elaborate description as a means of explanation. That brevity, however, is necessary to the author's main purpose: to present useable suggestions for the non-professional stage craftsman without the complexities and technicalities found in many books. This purpose has been accomplished by Mr. Buerki, and *Stage Craft for Non-Professionals* can easily prove to be one of the handiest and most enjoyable of the recent releases.

—E. W.

## PLAY REVIEWS

ROBERT B. CAPEL

**BUT FAIR TOMORROW**, Douglass F. Parkhirst; Samuel French, Inc.; comedy in 3 acts, copyright 1946, royalty \$25; 5 men, 9 women; 1 interior. High School \*\*\*\*, College \*.

The publishers are very enthusiastic about the quality of this play and their enthusiasm seems justified. The play is clean; the characters are well drawn, with the exception of a few bit roles which are so minor as to not harm the quality of the show. The high school director will do well to examine this play before making a final choice.

Production problems on the show are not difficult. Many of the characters are high school people and easily cast. The set is simple and easily adapted to almost any stage. Sound effects include a door bell, an airplane flying overhead, and a band in the street. One large picture is needed of one of the characters in the play, though this could be faked if necessary. Lighting is just that of the ordinary interior.

ROBERT B. CAPEL

**THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER**, Charlotte Chorpennung. A new dramatization of an old favorite. The Dramatic Publishing Company, copyright 1946. Royalty, \$10 to \$25. Comedy in four acts. 12 men, 6 women, and extras. 3 exteriors, 1 interior. High Schools \*\*, Colleges (Not recommended).

The ageless story of Tom, Huck, Joe, and Becky, and their friends. Recommended for High Schools but requires an ingenuous director good at exterior settings. To be done well the settings should be as nearly those described in the script as possible. The living room interior should not be difficult, and the exteriors might be played in front of drapes, or better yet a sky cyclorama.

A very helpful set of production notes is included in the text as published. These notes contain suggestions on costuming, characterization, property plots, and stage charts.

W. FREDRIC PLETTE

**LOVE IS TOO MUCH TROUBLE**, Guernsey LePelley. Row Peterson and Company, copyright 1946. Royalty 20% but not more than \$25. Comedy in three acts. 5 men, 9 women. 1 interior. High School \*\*, College (Not recommended).

A tired plot with a tired dean, a tired college president, and tireing men students dressed as girls, puts *Love is Too Much Trouble* in the category of tired plays.

Scene is the off-campus college students' hang-out and most characters are students at dear old Ivy Gate College. The set should be quite simple though a soda counter, stools, and a booth are a necessity. Casting would be easy. Sound effects require a telephone bell.

W. FREDRIC PLETTE

THE WIND IS NINETY, Captain Ralph Nelson. The Dramatic Publishing Company, copyright 1945-1946. Royalty on application. First Prize winner in the National Theatre Conference for 1945. Fantasy in three acts. 13 men, 3 women. 1 exterior. High Schools \*\*\*, Colleges \*\*\*\*.

*The Wind is Ninety*, was first produced at The Booth Theatre, New York, June 1945. A deeply moving study of a soldier who has been killed over Germany, and his endeavors to return to his family, in which he is aided by another soldier, one who fell in World War I.

Technically this would be a difficult show. The one exterior requires a large stage with several definite playing areas. Lights must be on dimmer circuits so that one playing area may be dimmed out and another dimmed up.

A Captain's and a Lieutenant's uniform of World War II are an absolute necessity as is the uniform of a private of World War I.

Casting should not be too difficult though there are several difficult emotional scenes. There are seven parts for children.

W. FREDRIC PLETTE

JANUARY THAW. William Roos. Adapted from the novel by Bellamy Partridge.

The Dramatic Publishing Company, copyright 1945-1946. Royalty on application. Comedy in three acts. 7 men, 6 women. 1 interior. College \*\*\*, High School \*\*\*.

*January Thaw* was first produced at the Golden Theatre, New York, February 5, 1946.

An excellent comedy which would be well suited to High School and College producing groups. The show is clean, and full of good humor which arises from new dramatic situations.

Chief drawback for producing organizations is the set, Connecticut colonial, and the large number of period properties which are used throughout the play and cannot be deleted without a rewrite job on the show itself. Properties required include a spice box, coffee grinder, ox yoke, and churn.

W. FREDRIC PLETTE

STAGE STRUCK, Olive Price. Row Peterson and Company, copyright 1946.

Royalty 20%. Comedy in three acts. 5 men, 7 women. 1 interior. College \*\*, High School \*\*.

A light carefree play about a stage struck high school girl and her 'troubles' as she tries to meet a famous author, in who's play she wishes to star, in its Little Theatre tryout. Who the author is turns out to be the surprise.

The one interior should be easy to set in any high school. Properties are those easy to borrow from friends of the cast. Lighting will be simple as no special effects are required. Casting would not be a problem. Sound effects require a telephone bell and a door bell or buzzer.

W. FREDRIC PLETTE

HOPE FOR THE BEST, William McCleery. Samuel French, copyright 1944-1946.

Royalty \$25. Comedy in three acts. 4 men, 3 women. 1 interior. High Schools (Not recommended), College \*\*.

*Hope For The Best* was first produced at The Fulton Theatre, New York,

in the Spring of 1946. The play is too sophisticated for high school but might prove fairly decent college fare.

The setting should be modern "without being suggestive of an airlines terminal." Properties required include a portable bar, a typewriter, and four globes of different sizes each of which is cut in half and hinged on the front and hooked on the back. The largest globe then contains the three smaller globes, and the smallest a ping pong ball.

No sound effects are required. The casting would not be difficult, and lighting would be no problem.

W. FREDRIC PLETTE

**THE FRENCH TOUCH**, Joseph Fields and Jerome Chodorov. The Dramatists Play Service, copyright 1946. Royalty \$35 for first performance and \$25 for each succeeding performance. Comedy in three acts. 10 men, 6 women. 1 interior. High Schools (Not recommended), Colleges \*\*.

*The French Touch* was first produced by Herbert Harris at the Cort Theatre, New York, December 23, 1945. It is a sophisticated comedy which would be objectionable to many audiences.

Sound effects include a patrol bell for which a record is available. The setting is elaborate and impossible for many theatres; demands for properties are extensive. Lighting would not be difficult. Costuming would include some German officer uniforms. Two or three of the men are minor bit parts. Most of the characters are well drawn.

The play is reasonably well written and interesting in plot. It is set in a theatre in France during the German occupation.

ROBERT B. CAPEL

**BRIGHTEN THE CORNER**, John Cecil Holm. The Dramatists Play Service, copyright 1946. Royalty \$35 for first performance and \$25 for each succeeding performance. Comedy in three acts. 3 women, 6 men. 1 interior. High Schools \*\*, Colleges \*\*\*.

Here is a rip roaring comedy which reads well and I believe would play as well as it reads. *Brighten the Corner* was first produced at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, December 12, 1945.

This is a comedy of situation where most of the humor arises from marriage mix-ups. I believe it would be excellent comedy fare for College audiences. The edition which I reviewed is not too good for high schools but the publishers state in their catalogue that it is available in high school as well as regular editions.

Casting problems with this show would be negligible. The comedy parts are written in the best Holm style and should nearly play themselves.

If staged as the script suggests you will need a wall right stage with a stair wall and an automatic elevator on the off-stage side of the main set in which most of the action transpires, but that can be easily dispensed with and the show played in a regulation three wall set.

A radio broadcast is an integral part of the show but the Dramatists Play Service will furnish at an extra charge the record for this.

Furniture is the readily available type and other than the suggested setting, production problems will be at a minimum.

W. FREDRIC PLETTE

THE RYAN GIRL, Edmund Goulding. Samuel French, copyright 1946. Royalty \$25. Drama in three acts. 5 men, 3 women. 1 interior. Not recommended for either High Schools or Colleges.

*The Ryan Girl* was first produced at the Plymouth Theatre, New York, September 25, 1945.

*The Ryan Girl* is a well written gripping drama, with excellent characterizations for several people. It is not however, a clean show, and could not be doctored without a major operation.

Production would require two telephone bells, 1 door bell, and 1 door buzzer. Elevator gates are frequently heard off stage. The show is concluded with an air interview, picked up on the radio in the room, between Lowell Thomas and one of the characters in the cast.

W. FREDRIC PLETTE

LADY IN DANGER, Max Afford and Alexander Kirkland. Samuel French, copyright 1945-1946. Royalty \$25. 8 men, 3 women. 1 interior. Comedy mystery in three acts. High Schools \*\*, Colleges \*\*\*.

*Lady in Danger* was first presented at the Broadhurst Theatre in New York late in 1945.

The scene is set in Melbourne, Australia, in the furnished flat of its chief characters. *Lady in Danger* is a true mystery chiller with German speaking Japanese sympathizers, hypodermic needles filled with lethal poison, cut telephone wires, hangmans nooses, bodies in closets, and a cat which murders people with its poison anointed claws.

The properties are the usual ones with the exception of the above mentioned hypodermic needle, a rising sun arm band, and a Japanese banner with Japanese characters upon it.

A telephone bell, and a fusillade of off stage revolver shots are the chief sound effects required.

Two characters must be able to pronounce a few German and Japanese words in an acceptable fashion, and a well behaved black cat is another casting problem.

A helpful light plot is included in the ext.

W. FREDRIC PLETTE

FOXHOLE IN THE PARLOR, Elsa Shelley. Dramatists Play Service, copyright 1946. Royalty, \$50 for first performance, \$25 for each succeeding performance. Drama in three acts. 4 men, 3 women. 1 set which shows interiors and exteriors of two houses and the intervening space between. Colleges \*\*, Not recommended for High Schools.

*Foxhole in the Parlor*, was first produced at The Booth Theatre, New York, May 27, 1945.

This is the story of a returned veteran who has been through many varied war experiences. He returns a different man than when he went away but none-the-less perfectly normal. He wants to think, to talk, to love, etc., as normal

humans do, but the remembrances of the war, and the persistant nagging of a sister, hang heavily upon him.

The setting would be quite difficult unless a wide stage, and a fairly deep one is available. It shows the interiors of two homes, and the street which runs along in front of them, and the grass plot between them. Action takes place sometimes simultaneously in all three locations, sometimes in two, and sometimes in only one, but to do a good job in production, all three are a must. The windows in the houses must be practical.

Casting would not be too difficult, but a negro character appears in an important part.

Properties required include: artists supplies, bicycle, dishes, typewriter, and piano. Sound effects are used in the play. A radio broadcast comes from the radios in the two homes, but the record for this broadcast may be had from Dramatists Play Service.

Some of the material would definitely be objectionable in high school, and might be to some college or university audiences.

W. FREDRIC PLETTE

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